

Departmental Short-Term and Long-Term Strategic Issues

Department: Fire and Rescue

FY2007

Advanced Life Support

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- The age of America's population continues to grow, which is one reason for an increase in medical service calls by the Fire & Rescue Department.
- Extensive training requirements have limited the number of volunteers that are able to become Advance Life Support (ALS) providers.
- The State has phased out the EMT-Cardiac level and all current EMT-Cardiac Technicians will have to bridge over to the new EMT-Intermediate which is a more demanding curriculum. This will create fewer certified ALS personnel on both the volunteer and career ranks.
- The new EMT-Intermediate curriculum can only be instructed by accredited institutions and currently Western Virginia EMS Council does not have the ability to provide the training. The Roanoke Regional Fire/EMS Training Center has accreditation to be an EMT-Intermediate site, however the lack of accredited facilities will still create shortages of future ALS personnel for Roanoke County.
- New State requirements on who can instruct ALS classes will have a negative effect on the number of individuals able to obtain ALS certification, which will reduce an already depleted pool of available applicants for career departments.
- A continued decline in volunteer EMS providers will require additional career personnel to maintain current service levels.
- The County's overall commitment to Advance Life Support Services will not be obtained if additional Training Staff are not employed to continue to administer an accredited EMT-Intermediate Training Center.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Ability to provide properly trained personnel in order to answer the short-term issues.
- The trend of reduced ALS trained volunteers will ultimately affect the services that are provided to the citizens and visitors of Roanoke County and surrounding jurisdictions.
- Compliance with Federal and State regulations for Ambulance Transport Billing will require long-term commitments in staff resources.
- Increased State regulations for ALS certification will continue to reduce the applicant pool of qualified individuals for employment with the County.

Communications

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- To implement the records management system and to properly train personnel on its use, funding of personnel to complete this project will create a strain on our budget.
- Departmental challenges of moving towards an e-government countywide environment.
- Technological life cycle of software and equipment dictates the necessity for continual change and enhancement of the department's technology.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Continue to purchase, maintain, and upgrade departmental hardware and software applications and provide proper technical staffing to support the technology.
- With the development and growth of computer technology the public and media's expectations for accurate record keeping and accountability has increased tremendously in just the last five years. In order to meet their expectations we must keep pace with this technology.

Fire Prevention

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- The newly implemented life safety surveys that are being performed by the operations division are expected to increase our workload through technical support and follow up inspections.
- Current staffing levels only allow us to conduct a small percentage of the required annual inspections, which has resulted in a backlog of work and a greater time commitment for each inspection.
- Lack of proper inspection frequency can result in an increase in commercial fire losses, which affects the tax base and economic development.
- Current staffing levels require inspectors to spend a large portion of their time dealing with the administrative aspects of their workload due to the absence of administrative support staff. This reduces the amount of annual inspections that can be conducted by the entire division.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Successful deterrence of arson cannot occur without the thorough investigation and prosecution of all arson related incidents.
- Economic development has increased the demand for technical support and inspections of facilities.
- Lack of inspections in existing facilities is increasing the risk for fire due to regular use, aging, and lack of maintenance.
- Demand for arson prevention, investigation, prosecution, training, and certification requirements, place a burden on our limited staffing and resources. This places greater emphasis on regional cooperation to accomplish these tasks.

Public Education

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- A large percentage of fires and injuries that occur in Roanoke County could be prevented through a comprehensive education program.
- An injury awareness and fire prevention program could reduce the amount of legitimate and false calls that the Fire & Rescue Department currently handles resulting in a tax dollar savings and increased level of safety for personnel.
- A year-round comprehensive education program may slow the increasing demand for EMS calls for service.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- With an increasing high-risk population in Roanoke County, including seniors and children, the need

for public education to address the special needs of these high-risk groups is ever increasing.

- It will be virtually impossible to keep pace with educational programs in the midst of increasing demands for services with current staffing levels.
- Reducing the amount of fires and injuries to the citizens of Roanoke County will ultimately enhance the quality of life of all citizens within the County.

Recruitment and Retention

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- Recruitment of ALS certified career personnel is becoming increasingly difficult. This is increasing the pressure to hire untrained recruits and provide ALS training within our system, a process that can last 2 years.
- Continued growth in EMS calls and declining number of volunteers will tax the current volunteer system even more
- Fee for Transport will require continued public education so that donations and recruitment of volunteers will not be adversely effected
- Trend towards significant number of Senior Residential Facilities and noted shortage of nursing staff may increase number of calls to these facilities.
- Following the National trend toward the decline of the volunteer base

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Trend towards aging population will increase EMS calls in general
- With the changes in our society it is more vital than ever to be accountable for our protocols and response times and how they compare on a national level. This will require more training and a higher standard in our recruitment of volunteer and career personnel.
- Decline of the volunteer base on a national level

Staffing

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- Reduction in volunteer availability has a significant effect on responses.
- Safety of current personnel is at risk due to insufficient resources.
- Call volume and community development requires the need for a new 24-hour Williamson Road Fire and Rescue Station, a 24-hour Hanging Rock Fire and Rescue station, and a 24-hour Oak Grove Fire and Rescue station utilizing regional cooperative efforts where applicable.
- Additional field personnel places more time demands and an increased workload on supervisory, administrative, and support personnel.
- Following the National trend toward the decline of the volunteer base

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Increasing call loads.
- Aging buildings and people.
- Nationally, the number of fires has decreased, however due to fires burning more intensely along with rapid fire spread the injury and death rate has remained the same if not higher. Rapid responses

with appropriate personnel will be the key to reducing the injury and death rate from fires.

- Our communities are continually growing within the realm of economic and residential development, which impacts the demands and level of service provided.
- Decline of the volunteer base on a national level

Data Collection

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- The need to collect, analyze, and evaluate data and information is essential to the decision making process for resource allocation, station locations, response zones, and other management decision making criteria.
- The department currently does not have administrative personnel resources and/or all-inclusive software, which share information from all our different divisions so that we can produce reports for benchmarking and goal setting.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- Utilizing the data and information from the collection process will allow for department development and become a basis for accreditation in the future.
- Continued departmental development from data and information generated from statistical analysis to begin the self-assessment phase of accreditation

Training

Short-Term Issues: List critical issues facing the department now and through the next couple fiscal years.

- We will continue to enhance the regional partnership by developing and implementing additional training programs for regional emergency services providers.
- Staffing levels require the training officer to manage, implement, and present current training programs. The needs for two instructors are critical in order to continue the training programs for department personnel.
- A part-time clerical person is required in order to manage the large volume of phone calls and requests for use of the facility. The regional partners of the training center would jointly fund this position.

Long-Term Issues: List major issues or trends that may confront the department beyond the next couple fiscal years.

- The increase in demands on fire service personnel requiring more technical skills along with the rise in EMS calls due to an aging population and in addition to higher mandated training standards makes it increasingly difficult to maintain and stay abreast of the latest technology in training. Training standards are being accomplished utilizing overtime and callback, which is reaching a level where needs require additional resources.
- Acquire funding for maintaining sufficient training staff that will support required training at the regional training center in order to meet the increasing demands of all volunteer and career personnel to include regional personnel.